A Solemn PROTESTATION *againſt* George Keith's *Advertiſment, Arbitrary Summons and Proceedings againſt Certain Perſons, and a Meeting of the People called* Quakers.

WHEREAS the ſaid *G. K.* a Scotchman, has aſſumed to himſelf a Power and Authority to Erect ſeveral Meetings of the Nature of ſome ſtrange and new Court of Judicature at *Turners-Hall, London*, one on the Eleventh of the Month called *June*, 1696. and another on the 29th of this preſent Month called *April*, 1697. (under pretence of having the *Permiſſion of the Civil Authority, that he is further to Detect the Vile and Groſs Errors and Hereſies of certain* Perſons by Name, and a Meeting of the People called *Quakers*) unto which he hath Cited or Summoned them, to *hear themſelves Re-charged, and Prov'd Guilty thereof*, as being *Repugnant to the Great Fundamentals of the Chriſtian Religion* (which Charges of his, as perverſly Stated by him, are Expreſly Denyed by us) for Proof thereof, Referring to his own Printed *Advertiſement* and *Narrative*, which have been largely Anſwered in Print, he having begun the Controverſy with us, by Printing divers bitter Invectives againſt us, expreſly Contrary to his own former Teſtimonies in Print; and divers of our Friends Books, in Anſwer to him, ſtill lye heavy upon him, unreply'd to. And ſeeing he cannot Effect his Invidious Deſigns in Print, to make his Odious Character of *Hereſie, Spreading Gangreen, and Contagion*, &c. take Effect againſt us, he has Preſum'd to Erect ſuch an Arbitrary Courſe of Judicature, in a Confuſed Meeting at *Turners-Hall*, and thereunto, in his own Name and Authority, to Summon the Perſons and Meeting, as aforeſaid, without their Privity, Concurrence, Conſent or Agreement thereunto; either as to the Time, Place, Terms or Propoſitions, but he is the Sole Impoſer.

We therefore, who are Concern'd in behalf of the Peaceable People called *Quakers*, both as Free-Born Engliſh-Men and Chriſtians, do deny, and Solemnly Teſtifie againſt the Uſurpation, Arbitrary and Irregular Proceedings of the ſaid *G. K.* and againſt his new Juriſdiction (aſſum'd by him) for the ſame Reaſons, which were Exhibited in Print the laſt Year, *Why the People called* Quakers *Refuſed their Appearance at his Peremptory Summons* (and therefore he had no Reaſon to Expect their Appearance this Year, the more Inſincere he, in his new Summons) and more particularly,

1. Becauſe he has no Legal Power to Erect any ſuch new *Court* of Judicature, and therein ſet himſelf up as Judge, and Publickly to Stage, Brand, and Condemn *Peaceable Proteſtant Subjects*, and that in their Abſence too (who are alſo Free-Born Engliſh-Men) as *Hereticks*, &c. and thereby to Endeavour to Expoſe them to the Scorn, Contempt and Rage of a mixt Multitude, who are unmeet to Judge of Religious and Spiritual Matters, or Controverſies.

2. We do not believe the Civil Authority, or any Concerned therein, on Due Conſideration, or Juſt Information, will Countenance or Permit ſuch an Uſurp'd Authority, or Pernicious Preſident, as the ſaid *G. K.* has Aſſum'd and Attempted in this Caſe; tending, not only to Diſcord, Diviſions, Heats, Animoſities and Tumults, but to Invade the juſt Liberties of Free-Born Engliſh-Men (who are Peaceable Proteſtant Subjects,) and to Gratify and Strengthen the Popiſh Intereſt, that they may Glory in ſuch Diviſions and Diſorders, made by Turbulent Incendiaries.

We are not Unſenſible, that ſome Officious and Envious Agents are in the bottom of this Turbulent Attempt; who, altho' they may pretend to be Reformed Proteſtants, yet ſavour too much of a Popiſh Perſecuting Spirit, (Juſtly Complain'd of by Proteſtants) and whoſe Work tends to bring an *Odium* upon the Proteſtant Religion.

3. We preſume the ſaid *G. K.* can Produce no Legal Commiſſion from the Civil Authority, either by Act of Parliament, or under the Great Seal of *England*, *Annually* to Erect and hold his ſaid Court of Judicature, to Summon, Convict and Condemn *Quakers* (ſo called) or any other Free-Born Engliſh-Men, or Proteſtant Subjects for *Hereſie* or *Hereticks*, who are Contrary wiſe Legally Recognized.

4. His feigned and falſe Pretence of *Juſtly Deſiring* the Perſons and Meeting aforeſaid to be preſent (*i. e.* to hear themſelves *Recharged*, Convicted and Condemn'd of *Vile* and *Groſs Hereſies*, &c.) appears, not only a peremptory Summons, but his Noiſe of *Vile* and *Groſs Errors*, and *Hereſies*, *ſpreading Gangreen and Contagion, Infecting many Thouſands in theſe Three Nations*, &c. does much Reſemble the Popiſh Clamours and Calumnies againſt Proteſtant Martyrs, and then *away with them, cut them off*; and Fire and Faggot followed, when the Writ *de Hæretico Gomburendo*, and the Six Bloody Articles were in Force, 31. *H.* 8. Ch. 14. both which are juſtly and happily Repeal'd.

5. For the ſame Reaſons, which the Parliament gave in the 16th Year of K. *Charles* the *Firſt*, againſt the *Court of Star-Chamber*, and *High-Commiſſion-Court* (Ch. 9, 10.) and for taking away, and diſſolving the ſame (tho' theſe had more Face of Authority, than this of *G. Keith*'s) we Oppoſe, Deny and Proteſt againſt theſe his Irregular and Arbitrary

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Proceedings and his new Court of Judicature, and Uſurped Power and Authority therein, as (not only tending to Diſcord, Diſorder, and Perſecution, and Endangering the Publick Peace, but alſo) Repugnant to the *Great Charter, Fundamental Laws (and Liberties of* England) Providing *that no Free-Man ſhall be Condemned, or any way Deſtroyed* without *due Order of Law*; as well as expreſly Contrary to the Intent and Tenor of the late Act of Parliament, made in the *1ſt* Year of the Reign of K. *William* and Q. *Mary*, Entituled, *An Act for Exempting their Majeſties Proteſtant Subjects Diſſenting from the Church of* England, *&c.* made *for the Eaſe of Scrupulous Conſcience in the Exerciſe of Religion, as an Effectual Means to Unite their Majeſties Proteſtant Subjects in Intereſt and Affection.* And the Meeting Places thereby Permitted or Allow'd and Recorded, being for *RELIGIOUS WORSHIP*, as in the ſaid Act is Expreſſed, Conſequently, not for Diviſion, Diſcord or Stages of Contentention; and therefore we are not free, either as Men or Chriſtians, to Subject our ſelves to any ſuch Irregular Summons, or Arbitrary Power and Uſurpation, as aforeſaid.

6. *Hereſie* having been made an High Crime in Law [*Mirror. Juſtices*, p. 16.] and highly Puniſhable, *G. K.*'s Publickly Staging and Branding us as *Hereticks*, appears both an High Defamation, and tending to Deſtroy us in our Reputations and Liberties alſo, both Contrary to Law and Goſple, and to Introduce a new and ſevere Perſecution to Gratify his Envy. For his Turbulent, Perſecuting Spirit and Apoſtacy, from Chriſtian Charity, Meekneſs and Moderation, and from that Faith that Works by Love, ſufficiently appear; alſo by his *Earneſt Expoſtulation with the moſt Pious and Learned of the Church of* England (as Flatteringly he Terms them) to Incenſe both the Clergy and Civil Authority againſt us, in his Printed Poſtſcript to his *Antichriſts and Sadducees*, and therein Commending the Popiſh Watch-Men of *Rome*, and *Popiſh Countries*, above *moſt among the Proteſtants*, for their Zeal againſt ſuch *Antichriſtian Errors and Hereſies*, as he there would make the World believe, Quakers hold *much worſe than the worſt of Popery* (p.40,41.) and his Summoning and Condemning us as *Hereticks*, appears ſo much Reſembling the Practice of ſome of his Country-Men of the *Presbytery*, to Incenſe the Rabble or Mob againſt our Friends in *Scotland*, as they have of late ſhamefully done, both in *Glaſgow* and *Edenbrough*, to the Great and Barbarous Abuſe of our poor harmleſs Friends in thoſe parts, by their bitter Clamours and Aſperſions againſt them, as *Hereticks*, &c. That we humbly hope, the Civil Proteſtant Government of *England* will never Countenance or Permit ſuch unwarrantable Uſurpation, which is not to uſe only *Spiritual Weapons* (as he pretends) but is of a contrary Nature and Tendence. We having treated

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the ſaid *G. K.* at many Select and Solemn Meetings, we have had with him, in all Chriſtian Patience and Tenderneſs on our parts; which were Slighted and Rejected by him. Thus we have Anſwer'd his *Advertiſement* and *Summons*, *ad hominem*, as Peaceable, Free-Born Engliſh-Men, whoſe preſent Liberty ought not to be Invaded or Diſquieted, either by any Arbitrary Uſurpation, or Contentious Irreligious Meetings, whoſe End is to Aſperſe and Abuſe others: Nor may ſuch, with ſafety, be Imitated, Allowed or Abetted by any of different Perſwaſions.

Now, let it be obſerved, whatever may happen to be the Effects or Conſequence of the ſaid *G. K.*'s Diſorderly and Unwarrantable Proceedings, or Meeting aforeſaid, we have given out this Solemn Proteſtation againſt the ſame, to Manifeſt our own Innocency and Clearneſs therefrom.

London, the 26th Day of the 2d Month, 1697.

Written, in Behalf of the People called Quakers, *by ſome of them Concerned.*

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